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Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions: trade and investment

Report of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade**

Summary

The Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade was held in Bangkok from 22 to 24 April 2014. The Meeting reviewed and revised the draft agreement/framework agreement/framework arrangement on facilitation of cross-border paperless trade. It also requested the Commission to endorse the establishment of an interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation, which would be tasked with: (a) further improving the draft text of the regional arrangement as a potential intergovernmental agreement; (b) preparing a draft road map for the implementation of substantive provisions in the draft text; and (c) other functions as agreed by the steering group.

The Commission may wish to consider the matters calling for action or brought to its attention, as contained in the report of the Meeting, and provide the secretariat with further guidance.

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** The late submission of the present document is due to the fact that the Meeting was held after the deadline for submission to Conference Services.

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I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

A. Draft agreement/framework agreement/framework arrangement on facilitation of cross-border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific

After discussing and revising the draft agreement/framework agreement/framework arrangement on facilitation of cross-border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific, which is available below, the Meeting requested the Commission to endorse the establishment of an interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation.

Draft agreement/framework agreement/framework arrangement on facilitation of cross-border paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific

The Parties to the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] (hereinafter referred to as "the Parties"),

Conscious of the importance of trade as an engine of growth and development and the need to increase the efficiency of international trade transactions to maintain and enhance the competitiveness of the region,

Recognizing that paperless trade makes international trade more efficient and transparent while improving regulatory compliance, particularly if trade-related data and documents in electronic form are exchanged across borders,

Noting that the trade and supply chain security initiatives under implementation in major export markets will make it increasingly necessary for all actors in the international supply chain to exchange data and documents electronically,

Considering the fact that many countries of the Asia-Pacific region are currently engaged in implementing electronic systems at the national level to expedite processing of trade-related data and documents,

Also considering the fact that countries of the Asia-Pacific region increasingly include provisions for electronic exchange of information in their trade agreements,

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Recognizing the conclusion of the negotiation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation at the ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization and the importance of the implementation of the Agreement,

Aware that facilitating mutual recognition and exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form between landlocked and transit countries would significantly reduce transit time and costs, and enhance trade and development opportunities for the landlocked countries,

Also aware that facilitating exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form would particularly enable small and medium-sized enterprises to more effectively participate in international trade and enhance their competitiveness,

Mindful of the different levels of economic as well as information and communications technology development of the Parties,

Acknowledging that the availability of information and communications technology and related physical infrastructure is not sufficient in some countries to ensure sustainable business development,

Noting the necessity to establish an enabling legal environment in order to maximize the benefits associated with cross-border paperless trade,

Desirous of formulating a legal framework to deepen and broaden cooperation in cross-border paperless trade facilitation among the Parties and to chart the future developments in this area,

Hereby *agree* as follows:

Article 1
Objective

The objective of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] is to promote cross-border paperless trade by enabling exchange and mutual recognition of trade-related data and documents in electronic form and facilitating interoperability among national and subregional single windows and/or other paperless trade systems, for the purpose of making international trade transactions more efficient and transparent while improving regulatory compliance.

Article 2
Scope

The present Agreement [Framework Agreement] applies to paperless trade between the Parties.

Article 3
Definitions

For the purpose of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement]:

(a) "Paperless trade" means trade taking place on the basis of electronic communications, including exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form;

(b) "Trade" means international trade in goods, including their import, export, transit and related services;

(c) "Electronic communication" means any communication that the parties make by means of data messages;

(d) "Data message" means information generated, sent, received or stored by electronic, magnetic, optical or similar means, including, but not limited to, electronic data interchange;

(e) "Trade-related data" means data contained in or transmitted in connection with a trade-related document;

(f) "Trade-related documents" means documents, both commercial and regulatory, required in completing commercial transactions;

(g) "Commercial transactions" means transactions relating to the sale of goods between parties whose places of business are in different territories;

(h) "Mutual recognition" means reciprocal recognition of the validity of trade-related data and documents in electronic form exchanged across borders between two or more countries;

(i) "Single window" means a facility that allows parties involved in a trade transaction to electronically lodge data and documents with a single entry point to fulfil all import, export and transit-related regulatory requirements;

(j) "Interoperability" means the ability of two or more systems or components to exchange information and to use the information that has been exchanged.

Article 4
Interpretation

Any interpretation of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] must have due regard for the general principles on which it is based, for its international character and for the need to promote uniformity in its application.

Article 5
General principles

1. With recognition of the right to regulate, the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] shall be guided by the following general principles:

(a) Functional equivalence: functions of paper-based requirements should be analysed to determine how those functions could be fulfilled through electronic means;

(b) Promotion of interoperability;

(c) Improved trade facilitation and regulatory compliance;

(d) Cooperation between the public and private sectors;

[(e) The principle of interoperability presumes technical and technological compatibility of information systems, including the ability to exchange data in commonly used electronic formats, as well as stability. Interoperable systems should possess and maintain the capacity to enrol new participants — both from within and outside the country — enabling them to start operating the system quickly;

(f) Reliability of infrastructure, which applies common safety requirements for all of the participants. (Russian Federation)]

2. The Parties agree that implementing national legislation and regulations that apply these principles to the exchange of trade-related data and documents [including those for pre-shipment transboundary data exchange (India)] in electronic form will establish common levels of trust and increase interoperability.

Article 6
National policy framework, enabling domestic legal environment and paperless trade committee

1. The Parties shall endeavour to establish a national policy framework for paperless trade, which may define targets and implementation strategies, allocate resources, and a legislative framework.

2. The Parties shall endeavour to create an enabling domestic legal environment for paperless trade in conformity with international standards and best practices.

3. The Parties may establish a national committee, comprised of relevant representatives of government and private sector parties, in accordance with their domestic environment. The committee will promote a legally enabling domestic environment for exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form as well as facilitate interoperability of cross-border paperless trade. The Parties may alternatively rely on a similar body already functioning domestically in lieu of establishing a separate committee and may designate that body, or an appropriate organizational unit or working group within it, as the national committee for the purpose of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

Article 7
Facilitation of cross-border paperless trade and development of single windows

1. The Parties shall endeavour to facilitate cross-border paperless trade by enabling exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form, utilizing the existing systems in operation or creating new systems.

2. The Parties are encouraged to develop their single window systems and use them for cross-border paperless trade. In developing single window systems or upgrading existing ones, the Parties are encouraged to make them consistent with the general principles provided in the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

Article 8
Cross-border mutual recognition of trade-related data and documents in electronic form

1. The Parties shall provide for mutual recognition of trade-related data and documents in electronic form originating from other Parties on the basis of a substantially equivalent level of reliability. To this extent, the Parties may constitute a technical group among themselves with the existing focal points.

2. The substantially equivalent level of reliability would be mutually agreed upon among the Parties through the institutional arrangement established under the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

Article 9
International standards for exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form

1. The Parties shall endeavour to apply international standards and guidelines in order to ensure regional and global interoperability in paperless trade and develop safe and secure communication protocols for the exchange of data.

2. The Parties are strongly encouraged to become involved in the development of international standards and best practices related to cross-border paperless trade.

Article 10
Relation with other legal instruments enabling cross-border paperless trade

1. The Parties shall, where appropriate, take into account, and whenever possible adopt, available and accepted international legal instruments made by relevant United Nations bodies and other international organizations[, such as the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts.[1] (delete: Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Korea)]

2. The Parties shall endeavour to ensure that the cross-border exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form is consistent with international law as well as regional and international regulations and best practices. The relevant provisions of international law, regional and international regulations and best practices shall be decided on by the institutional arrangement established under the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

Article 11
Legal liability framework

The Parties shall endeavour to establish an adequate legal and regulatory framework to address specific liability and enforcement issues that may arise in relation to the cross-border exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form. [The data utilization by member customs administrations and other government agencies should adhere to the principles of commercial secrecy, should prohibit unauthorized access and should allow for remedial provisions, including compensation for any commercial losses. The necessary legal protection from liability for member customs administrations should also be incorporated. (India and Islamic Republic of Iran)]

Article 12
Institutional arrangements

1. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) shall, for the purposes of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement], establish a paperless trade council comprising one (1) ministerial-level nominee from each Party and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP. The Council shall meet once a year.

[1] General Assembly resolution 60/21, annex.

2. In the performance of its functions, the Paperless Trade Council shall be supported by a standing committee, which shall supervise and coordinate the implementation of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] and submit its recommendations to the Council for review. The Standing Committee shall be composed of senior representatives of each Party and will meet at least once a year.

3. For the purposes of implementing the Agreement [Framework Agreement], the Standing Committee may establish working groups comprising relevant technical or legal experts, which shall report to the Standing Committee on the implementation of the related action plan under the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

4. The ESCAP secretariat shall be designated the Secretariat of the Agreement [Framework Agreement]. It shall also be the secretariat of the bodies established under the present Agreement [Framework Agreement]. It shall provide support in coordinating, reviewing and supervising the implementation of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] and in all related matters.

Article 13
Action plan

1. The Standing Committee, under the supervision of the Paperless Trade Council, shall develop a comprehensive action plan, which shall include all concrete actions and measures with clear targets and implementation timelines necessary for creating a consistent, transparent and predictable environment for the implementation of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement], including the implementation schedules of the respective Parties. The Parties shall implement the action plan in accordance with the schedule, and the implementation status of each Party shall be reported to the Standing Committee.

2. The action plan shall incorporate a road map for the operationalization of cross-border paperless trade, including the adoption of international standards, implementation of pilot projects and capacity-building related to the present Agreement [Framework Agreement]. It should also incorporate a mechanism for the assessment of existing legal frameworks and technological gaps and for their further improvement in order to enable paperless trade.

Article 14
Pilot projects and sharing of lessons learned

1. The Parties shall endeavour to initiate and launch pilot projects on cross-border exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form, in particular among customs and other regulatory agencies. The Parties shall collaborate on such pilot projects through the institutional arrangement established under the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

2. The Parties may report to the Standing Committee on the progress of pilot projects to facilitate the sharing of experience and lessons learned and to establish a collection of best practices for interoperability of cross-border exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form. The exchange of experience and lessons learned would extend beyond the Parties to the present Agreement [Framework Agreement], to the extent possible and as appropriate, in an effort to promote paperless trade implementation throughout the region and beyond.

Article 15
Capacity-building

1. The Parties shall [may (Bangladesh and Islamic Republic of Iran)] cooperate to provide technical support and assistance to each other in order to facilitate the implementation of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement]. Technical assistance shall be provided through various mechanisms, including a "request and offer" approach, to facilitate exchanges of skills and best practices.

2. The Parties may collaborate on capacity-building through the institutional arrangement established under the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

3. Special consideration shall be given by the Parties to requests from least developed and landlocked developing countries for technical assistance and cooperation arrangements designed to assist them in developing their paperless trade capacity and in taking full advantage of the potential benefits of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

4. The Parties may invite development partners for more effective technical and financial assistance in the implementation of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

Article 16
Implementation of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement]

1. Each Party shall endeavour to implement the provisions of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] by creating a legally enabling environment and developing the necessary technical infrastructure to facilitate the cross-border exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form. The Parties recognize that the least developed and landlocked developing countries may need technical and financial assistance to develop technical infrastructure and to create a legally enabling environment, which are essential for facilitating the cross-border exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form.

2. An implementation schedule for each Party shall be developed as part of the action plan based on an assessment of the readiness of the Parties.

Article 17
Dispute resolution

1. Any dispute that may arise among the Parties regarding the interpretation and application of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] shall be settled by means of negotiation or consultation among the Parties concerned.

2. In the event that the Parties to a dispute involving the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] are unable to settle it by negotiation or consultation, the Parties shall be referred to conciliation if any of the Parties to the dispute requests such a referral.

3. The dispute shall be submitted to one or more conciliators selected by the Parties involved in the dispute. If the Parties to the dispute fail to agree on [make (Japan)] the choice of a conciliator or conciliators within three (3) months after the request for conciliation, any of those Parties may request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint a single conciliator to whom the dispute shall be submitted.

4. The recommendation of the conciliator or conciliators appointed, while not binding in character, shall become the basis of renewed consideration by the Parties to the dispute.

5. By mutual consent, the Parties to the dispute may decide in advance to accept the recommendation of the conciliator or conciliators as binding.

6. The provisions of the present Article shall not be construed as excluding other measures for the settlement of disputes mutually agreed among the Parties to the dispute.

Article 18
Procedure for signing and becoming a Party

1. The present Agreement [Framework Agreement] shall be open for signature by States members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP member States) at _____, on _____, and thereafter at United Nations Headquarters in New York from _____ to _____.

2. The ESCAP member States referred to in paragraph 1 above may become Parties to the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] by:

(a) Signature subject to ratification, acceptance or approval; or

(b) Accession.

3. Ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Article 19
Entry into force

1. The present Agreement [Framework Agreement] shall enter into force ninety (90) days after the date on which the Governments of at least five (5) ESCAP member States have consented to be bound by the Agreement [Framework Agreement] pursuant to Article 18, paragraphs 2 and 3.

2. For each ESCAP member State that deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date upon which the conditions for the entry into force of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] have been met, the Agreement [Framework Agreement] shall enter into force for that Party ninety (90) days after the date of its deposit of the said instrument.

Article 20
Procedures for amending the Agreement [Framework Agreement]

1. The text of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] may be amended by the procedure specified in the present Article.

2. Amendments to the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] may be proposed by any Party.

3. The text of any proposed amendment shall be circulated to all members of the Paperless Trade Council by the secretariat at least sixty (60) days before the Council meeting at which it is proposed for adoption.

4. An amendment shall be adopted by the Paperless Trade Council by a two-thirds majority of the Parties present and voting. The amendment as

adopted shall be communicated by the secretariat to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall circulate it to all Parties for acceptance.

5. An amendment adopted in accordance with paragraph 4 of the present Article shall enter into force twelve (12) months after it has been accepted by two thirds of the Parties at the time of its adoption [acceptance]. The amendment shall enter into force with respect to all Parties to the Agreement [Framework Agreement] except those which, before the twelve-month period specified above, declare that they do not accept the amendment. Any Party that has declared that it does not accept an amendment adopted in accordance with paragraph 4 may at any time thereafter deposit an instrument of acceptance of such amendment with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The amendment shall enter into force for that Party twelve (12) months after the date of deposit of the said instrument.

Article 21
Reservations

Reservations may not be made with respect to any of the provisions of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement]. (Secretariat to propose text in conformity with previous ESCAP treaties.)

Article 22
Withdrawal

Any Party may withdraw from the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] by written notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The withdrawal shall take effect twelve (12) months after the date of receipt by the Secretary-General of such notification.

Article 23
Suspension of validity

The operation of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] shall be suspended if the number of Parties becomes less than five (5) for any period of twelve (12) consecutive months. In such a situation, the secretariat shall notify the Parties. The provisions of the Agreement [Framework Agreement] shall again become operative if the number of Parties reaches five (5).

Article 24
Limits to the application

Nothing in the present Agreement [Framework Agreement] shall be construed as preventing a Party from taking such action, compatible with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and limited to the exigencies of the situation, as it considers necessary for its external or internal security.

Article 25
Depositary

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall be designated the depositary of the present Agreement [Framework Agreement].

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto, have signed the present Agreement [Framework Agreement],

OPENED for signature on the _____ at _____, in a single copy in the Chinese, English and Russian languages, the three texts being equally authentic.

B. Terms of reference for the interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation

The Meeting decides to establish the interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation under the auspices of the ESCAP secretariat with the following terms of reference.[2]

1. Name

This body shall be called the Interim Intergovernmental Steering Group on Cross-Border Paperless Trade Facilitation.

2. Membership

National focal points for the implementation of Commission resolution 68/3 from ESCAP members or official nominees of seats of Government of ESCAP members shall have an open invitation to participate in all the activities of the Steering Group.

3. Function

The Steering Group shall have the following duties:

(a) To further improve the draft text of the regional arrangement as a potential intergovernmental agreement;

(b) To prepare a draft road map for the implementation of substantive provisions in the draft text;

(c) Other functions as agreed by the Steering Group.

4. Mode of operation

1. In carrying out its function, the Steering Group shall convene regularly, either physically or virtually, but at least once every six months.

2. The Steering Group may elect officers, a chair and vice-chair(s) in the first meeting to conduct its regular meetings.

3. Participation in the meetings of the Steering Group shall be on a self-financed basis. However, participation of ESCAP least developed and landlocked developing countries in physical meetings may be supported by the secretariat on request, subject to the availability of the necessary financial resources.

4. To the extent possible, physical meetings shall be held in conjunction with capacity-building events.

5. The Steering Group may invite relevant regional experts, including experts from the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, in conducting its duties.

6. Decisions by the Steering Group will be made based on standard ESCAP practices in intergovernmental meetings.

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[2] See paragraph 30 below.

7. The Steering Group will cease operation once it has completed its duties.

5. Reporting

The Steering Group shall report progress made in carrying out its duties to the Commission at each of its sessions.

6. Secretariat

The ESCAP secretariat, specifically the Trade and Investment Division, shall serve as the secretariat of the Steering Group.

II. Summary of proceedings

A. Update on the implementation of Commission resolution 68/3

1. The meeting had before it the document entitled "Update on the implementation of Commission resolution 68/3" (E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/1). The Director of the Trade and Investment Division introduced the document.

2. The Meeting noted the progress made in implementing Commission resolution 68/3.

B. Introduction to United Nations treaties and the roles and obligations of parties

3. A representative of the Treaty Section, Office of Legal Affairs, made a presentation on treaties and the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties.[3]

4. Statements were made by representatives of the following countries: Iran (Islamic Republic of); and Republic of Korea.

5. The representative of the Republic of Korea requested that the representative of the Office of Legal Affairs clarify the difference between an "Agreement" and an "Arrangement". The representative of the Office of Legal Affairs clarified that it was not the title, but the substance, that made a text an international treaty.

6. In responding to a question from the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the readiness of the current draft text of the regional arrangement, the representative of the Office of Legal Affairs stated that the text featured the standard final clauses of an international treaty.

C. Consideration of the draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade

7. The Meeting had before it the following documents: (a) "Draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade" (E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/WP.1); (b) "Proposed amendments to the draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade" (E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/CRP.1); (c) an addendum to "Proposed amendments to the draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade" (E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/CRP.1/Add.1); and (d) "Explanatory note to the draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade" (E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/CRP.2).

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1155, No. 18232.

8. With reference to the proposed amendments distributed in advance, introductory statements were made by representatives of the following countries: Bangladesh; China; Republic of Korea; and Russian Federation. In addition, representatives of the following countries made statements: Iran (Islamic Republic of); and Japan.

9. In the process of negotiating the draft text of the regional arrangement, statements, proposals and interventions were made by representatives of the following countries: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Thailand; and Uzbekistan.

10. The meeting reviewed the draft text paragraph by paragraph. The following revisions and suggestions were made:

1. Preamble

11. A paragraph reading "Recognizing the conclusion of the negotiation of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation at the ninth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization and the importance of the implementation of the Agreement," was added to the Preamble.

2. Substantive clauses

12. At the beginning of Article 5.1, the words "With recognition of the right to regulate," were added, while subparagraphs (a) and (c) were deleted from the same article.

13. With regard to Article 5.1, the delegation of the Russian Federation proposed that two additional subparagraphs be added, namely: "(e) The principle of interoperability presumes technical and technological compatibility of information systems, including the ability to exchange data in commonly used electronic formats, as well as stability. Interoperable systems should possess and maintain the capacity to enrol new participants — both from within and outside the country — enabling them to start operating the system quickly; (f) Reliability of infrastructure, which applies common safety requirements for all of the participants".

14. In respect of Article 5.2, the delegation of India proposed that the phrase ", including those for pre-shipment transboundary data exchange," be added after the word "documents".

15. In Article 6.1, the word "may" and the brackets were deleted while retaining the words "shall endeavour to". In Article 6.3, the word "committee" was substituted for "paperless trade committee" throughout.

16. In Article 7, the word "national" was deleted from the expressions "national single window" and "national single windows". The words "or upgrading existing ones," were added after the words "single window systems" in the second sentence of Article 7.2.

17. In Article 8.1, a second sentence was added, which read as follows: "To this extent, the Parties may constitute a technical group among themselves with the existing focal points". In Article 8.2, the word "mutually" was added before the word "agreed" and the word "upon" immediately after.

18. In Article 9.1, the words "and develop safe and secure communication protocols for the exchange of data" were added at the end.

19. In Article 10.1, the words ", where appropriate," were added after the word "shall", and the words "and accepted" were added after the word "available". Proposals were made by the delegations of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Korea to delete the words "such as the United Nations Convention on the Use of Electronic Communications in International Contracts".

20. In Article 11, the delegations of India and the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that the following two sentences be added at the end: "The data utilization by member customs administrations and other government agencies should adhere to the principles of commercial secrecy, should prohibit unauthorized access and should allow for remedial provisions, including compensation for commercial losses. The necessary legal protection from liability for member customs administrations should also be incorporated".

21. In Article 13.1, the words "set out" were replaced by the word "include" and the words "and implement" after the word "develop" were deleted. The following phrase and sentence were added at the end ", including the implementation schedules of the respective Parties. The Parties shall implement the action plan in accordance with the schedule, and the implementation status of each Party shall be reported to the Standing Committee".

22. In Article 14.2, the word "shall" was replaced by the word "may", and the words "on a voluntary basis" were deleted.

23. In Article 15.1, the delegations of Bangladesh and the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that the word "shall" be replaced by the word "may". In Article 15.3, the words "wherever possible" were deleted, and the words "and landlocked developing" were added after the word "developed".

24. In Article 16.1, the following sentence was added: "The Parties recognize that least developed and landlocked developing countries may need technical and financial assistance to develop technical infrastructure and to create a legally enabling environment, which are essential for facilitating the cross-border exchange of trade-related data and documents in electronic form".

3. Final clauses

25. In Article 17.1, the words "an agreement" were replaced by the words "negotiation or consultation". In Article 17.3, the words "mutual agreement between the Parties to the dispute" were replaced by the words "the Parties involved in the dispute"; the words "Executive Secretary of ESCAP" were replaced by the words "Secretary-General of the United Nations". Also in Article 17.3, the delegation of Japan proposed that the words "agree on" be replaced by the word "make". In Article 17.5, the words "agreement" and "agree" were replaced by the words "consent" and "decide" respectively.

26. In Article 20.3, the words "forty-five (45)" were replaced by the words "sixty (60)".

27. While good progress was made in revising the draft text and consensus was reached on most points, several proposed changes or additions would require further discussion and clarification.

28. Regarding the title of the draft text of the regional arrangement, the Meeting did not reach a consensus on the options proposed by different delegations: "Agreement"; "Framework Agreement"; and "Framework Arrangement".

D. Other matters

29. The Meeting discussed possible ways to finalize the draft text of the regional arrangement. While some member States expressed satisfaction with the text and a strong desire to finalize it as an intergovernmental agreement as soon as possible, others indicated that more time was needed to refine it and agree on the modalities for its adoption. All member States agreed, however, on the need to ensure that continued progress be made on enabling cross-border paperless trade facilitation.

30. In order for progress to continue, the Chair of the Meeting proposed that an interim intergovernmental steering group on cross-border paperless trade facilitation be established. The Steering Group would be open to all interested ESCAP member States and would be tasked with: (a) further improving the draft text of the regional arrangement as a potential intergovernmental agreement; (b) preparing a draft road map for the implementation of substantive provisions in the draft text; and (c) other functions as agreed by the Steering Group. The Meeting agreed to the proposal made by the Chair and requested that the secretariat draft the terms of reference of the steering group (see chap. I, sect. B).

E. Adoption of the revised draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade

31. The Meeting discussed and revised the draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade.

F. Adoption of the report of the Meeting

32. The Meeting adopted the present report on 24 April 2014.

III. Organization of the session

A. Opening, duration and organization

33. The Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade was held in Bangkok from 22 to 24 April 2014.

34. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP made an opening statement.

35. Ms. Srirat Rastapana, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce of Thailand, made an opening statement.

B. Attendance

36. The session was attended by representatives of the following members of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Nepal; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Turkey; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.

37. The session was also attended by representatives of the following United Nations bodies: Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations Headquarters, and United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

38. The following intergovernmental organization was represented: World Customs Organization.

39. A total of 16 observers also attended.[4]

C. Election of officers

40. The following officers were elected:

Chair:	Mr. Toya Narayan **Gyawali** (Nepal)
Vice-Chair:	Mr. Khemdeth **Sihavong** (Lao People's Democratic Republic)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Mahmood **Zargar** (Islamic Republic of Iran)

D. Agenda

41. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting:
   - (a) Opening address;
   - (b) Election of officers;
   - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Update on the implementation of Commission resolution 68/3.
3. Introduction to United Nations treaties and the roles and obligations of parties.
4. Consideration of the draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade:
   - (a) Preamble;
   - (b) Substantive clauses;
   - (c) Final clauses.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the revised draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade.
7. Adoption of the report of the meeting.

[4] See E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/INF/2.

Annex

List of documents

Document symbol	Document title	Agenda item
General series		
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/1	Update on the implementation of Commission resolution 68/3	2
Limited series		
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/L.1	Annotated provisional agenda	1
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/L.2	Draft report	7
Information series		
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/INF/1	Information for participants	
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/INF/2	List of participants	
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/INF/3	Tentative programme	
Conference room papers		
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/CRP.1 and Add.1	Proposed amendments to the draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade	4
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/CRP.2	Explanatory note to the draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade	4
Working papers		
E/ESCAP/PTA/IGM.1/WP.1	Draft text of a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade	4

E/2014/39
E/ESCAP/70/32

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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Introduction

1. Owing to the special circumstances in Bangkok, the seventieth session of the Commission was divided into two phases. Phase I was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok on 23 May 2014, with Phase II scheduled to be held from 4 to 8 August 2014.

Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

2. At its seventieth session (Phase I), the Commission adopted two resolutions and seven decisions, which are reproduced below. The two resolutions are brought to the attention of the Council.

A. Resolutions adopted by the Commission at its seventieth session (Phase I)

Resolution 70/1:
Implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Recalling its resolution 68/10, in which it decided to convene the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration in 2013,

Welcoming the successful outcome of the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok from 17 to 20 December 2013,[1]

1. *Endorses* the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, as contained in the annex to the present resolution;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the recommendations of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) To assist members and associate members in setting up and supporting the work of the four area-specific expert working groups in accordance with section II, paragraphs 3 and 6(b), of the Bangkok Declaration;

(c) To convene in 2015 the intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings for the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific mentioned in section II, paragraph 3, of the Bangkok Declaration;

(d) To convene the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific in 2015 to review the progress on the agenda of regional economic integration outlined in section III of the present Declaration, consider the recommendations of the intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings and decide on follow-up actions, as expressed in section II, paragraph 6(d), of the Bangkok Declaration;

[1] See E/ESCAP/70/7.

(e) To report to the Commission at its seventy-first and seventy-second sessions on the implementation of the present resolution.

Second plenary meeting
23 May 2014

Annex

Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific

I. Preamble

We, the Ministers and representatives of members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific attending the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, held in Bangkok from 17 to 20 December 2013,

Emphasizing the need to sustain the region's inclusive and sustainable development to continue to reduce the number of poor people living in absolute poverty from the current levels and to close the development gaps across countries,

Reaffirming the unique role of the Commission as the most representative body for the Asian and Pacific region and its comprehensive mandate as the main economic and social development centre of the United Nations system for the Asian and Pacific region,

Recalling the First Ministerial Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation, which was held in Manila in 1963 under the auspices of the Commission and led to the establishment of the Asian Development Bank,

Also recalling important contributions of the Commission to regional economic cooperation and integration, as highlighted in its resolution 68/10 on enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific, and noting other important regional economic cooperation and integration initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region,

Further recalling that the Commission in its resolution 68/10 requested the Executive Secretary to support the convening of the First Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Integration in 2013, marking the fiftieth anniversary of the First Ministerial Conference on Asian Economic Cooperation, and to review the theme study for the sixty-eighth session of the Commission, entitled *Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century*,[2, 3]

Recalling Commission resolution 69/10 on promoting regional information and communications technology connectivity and building knowledge-networked societies in Asia and the Pacific,

Also recalling General Assembly resolutions 64/186 and 67/194 on building connectivity through the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway and 67/298 on developing cooperation for better connectivity and telecommunications transit routes in the Trans-Eurasian region,

Recognizing the important role of safe, efficient, clean, reliable and affordable transport systems in supporting sustainable economic growth, improving social welfare of people and enhancing regional integration in Asia and the Pacific,

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[2] ST/ESCAP/2629.

[3] See also E/ESCAP/68/22.

Also recognizing that, given the vast land mass, oceans and diversity of the Asian and Pacific region, land-based and sea-based fibre-optic cable networks and satellites play a critical role in developing a seamless regional information space,

Further recognizing that, in the context of economic uncertainties after the global financial and economic crisis and with the rising economic prominence of the Asia-Pacific region in the world economy, the promotion of intraregional trade within Asia and the Pacific can provide enormous opportunities to support economic growth and employment creation in the region,

Reaffirming the imperatives of sustainable development, reducing poverty and inequalities, increasing the resilience of our economies to natural and economic disasters and the effects of climate change, sustainable management of natural resources, enhancing food and energy security, closing the digital divide and reducing development gaps across countries to enhance social cohesion,

Emphasizing that fostering trade, investment, and economic and development cooperation among countries in Asia and the Pacific can create opportunities not only for supporting economic growth, but also for achieving wider developmental objectives,

Noting that improving connectivity with regard to land, river, sea and air transport as well as energy and information and communications technology infrastructure, as well as trade facilitation, is critical to boost trade, investment and the movement of people among countries,

Emphasizing the need to substantially enhance the degree of connectivity in the region, including through investment in transport, energy and information and communications technology infrastructure, and through improvements in trade and transport facilitation,

Recalling Commission resolution 69/6 on the implementation of the Tehran Declaration to promote public-private partnerships in infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development,

Emphasizing the need to develop existing, evolving and innovative national, regional and global partnerships to help members and associate members address the challenges and seize the opportunities associated with growing populations, the demographic dividend, internal and international migration, and urbanization,

Noting the urgent need to increase the availability of and access to financing for regional infrastructure projects, especially those that link least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States with each other and with other economies in Asia and the Pacific, including through facilitating transit transportation to seaports,

Also noting with satisfaction the adoption of the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific,[4] which is aimed at improving the economic feasibility of the provision of regular and predictable inter-island shipping services in the Pacific subregion,

Emphasizing that cooperation among countries in the region is critical to increase resilience to address vulnerabilities and risks of natural disasters, food and energy insecurity, scarcity of surface- and groundwater resources, and unsustainable use of natural resources, including those in the oceans, and the effects of climate change in order to pursue a sustainable development path.

[4] See E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/6.

Also emphasizing the need to address the growing gap in broadband connectivity between developed and developing countries, so that affordable access to high-speed networks is available to all,[5]

Noting that the Zero Hunger Challenge, which was launched globally by the Secretary-General in Brazil in June 2012 and regionally by the Deputy Secretary-General on the occasion of the sixty-ninth session of the Commission, could provide a useful framework for regional cooperation in the area of food security,

Recognizing the accumulation of financial resources within Asia and the Pacific, the need for facilitating their broader flow and the positive role of financial cooperation in enhancing economic resilience and closing infrastructure gaps in the region, and building on the work under way for widening the scope of existing arrangements and deliberating on new relevant coordinated mechanisms, such as a regional financial institution that promotes infrastructure investment and complements existing financial institutions,

Acknowledging the valuable role of regional groupings and organizations, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Customs Union and Common Economic Space of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, the East Asia Summit, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Melanesian Spearhead Group, the Micronesian Trade Committee, the Pacific Islands Forum, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, in the area of regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration,

Taking note of the visions for a broader Asian and Pacific community,

Having reviewed the theme study prepared for the sixty-eighth session of the Commission, *Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century*,

II. Policy directions

1. *Resolve* to work together to pursue enhanced regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific in the following four areas:

(a) Moving towards the formation of an integrated market;

(b) The development of seamless connectivity across the region in the areas of transport, energy and information and communications technology, among others, including through the full realization of key regional initiatives;

(c) Enhancing financial cooperation for, among other things, closing infrastructure gaps across countries in the region and exploring the possibility of providing liquidity support;

(d) Increasing economic and technical cooperation to address shared vulnerabilities and risks;

2. *Agree* to pursue the agenda for such cooperation as outlined in section III of the present Declaration as an important step towards realizing a broad long-term vision of an economic community of Asia and the Pacific;

[5] The gap in broadband connectivity is widening in terms of indicators, such as total international Internet bandwidth, international Internet bandwidth per user, and in terms of broadband access between the developing and developed countries of Asia and the Pacific. *Source*: ESCAP, based on the International Telecommunication Union, World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators database 2013.

3. *Decide* to create four area-specific expert working groups to take stock of current regional efforts pertaining to economic cooperation and integration, to identify gaps in those efforts, to recommend concrete actions to make progress in each of the four areas listed in operative paragraph 1 above, and to submit their recommendations to intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings to be convened for the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific to take place in 2015;

4. *Agree* to assist countries with special needs, especially least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, in taking advantage of opportunities arising from regional economic cooperation and integration, including, as appropriate, through support to enhance their capacities and through technical assistance;

5. *Invite* members and associate members of the Commission, donor countries, multilateral financing institutions, relevant agencies and organizations of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental and regional organizations, relevant non-governmental organizations, international think tanks and the private sector to provide financial and technical support, within their mandates and core competencies, for the implementation of the agenda for regional economic cooperation and integration;

6. *Request* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord high priority to the agenda for regional economic cooperation and integration in the work of ESCAP;

(b) To support the work of the four area-specific expert working groups including the preparation of their terms of reference in consultation with members and associate members and convene the intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings for the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific referred to in operative paragraph 3 above;

(c) To ensure effective coordination with United Nations and multilateral agencies concerned, including relevant subregional technical organizations within their respective mandates and core competencies, in supporting the implementation of the regional economic cooperation and integration agenda;

(d) To convene the second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific in 2015 to review the progress on the agenda of regional economic integration outlined in section III of the present Declaration, consider the recommendations of the intergovernmental open-ended preparatory meetings and decide on follow-up actions.

III. Suggested agenda for regional economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific

1. The agenda for regional economic cooperation and integration is aimed at deepening and broadening economic cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific and at moving towards the formation of an economic community of Asia and the Pacific as a long-term goal.

2. Recognizing the important progress achieved by regional groupings and organizations in integrating their subregions, the agenda is designed to support their efforts and further strengthen their contribution as building blocks of a broader regional initiative. For this purpose, the subregional offices of the secretariat could provide support to and liaise with the subregional groupings in their respective subregions within their respective mandates.

3. In order to promote and facilitate opportunities for mutual learning and coordination among regional groupings and organizations, including their sectoral

cooperation initiatives, ESCAP could facilitate consultations among such groupings and organizations at the annual sessions of the Commission for the purpose of discussing progress in economic cooperation and integration in ESCAP subregions, sharing best practices and considering ways to enhance economic cooperation and integration among the subregions.

4. It is important to recognize that challenges generally associated with least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, such as small market sizes, geographic limitations and absence of relevant trade infrastructure, reduce the impact of regional cooperation and integration initiatives that are meant to enhance trade, market development and improve economic growth. In order to broaden the access of those countries to regional trade and connectivity, there is a need to implement specific policies that focus on productive capacity-building related to infrastructure development, broadening the economic base, access to finance and providing assistance in overcoming the risks and shocks of entering into a regional trade block.

5. The second Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific, which is proposed to be held in 2015, will take stock of the progress made on the agenda of cooperation and integration agreed at the First Ministerial Conference and consider the recommendations of the area-specific expert working groups established by it.

A. Moving towards the formation of an integrated market

6. In order to exploit complementarities between subregions, it is critical to move towards an integrated market of Asian and Pacific economies. One of the four area-specific expert working groups will explore the possible options for building an integrated market of the Asian and Pacific region in an inclusive and equitable manner.[6]

7. Recognizing the importance of trade for growth and development, members and associate members will strive to foster trade facilitation, bring down trade barriers through cooperation on liberalization, and resist and refrain from protectionism.

8. It is necessary to recognize the importance of migration flows for tackling structural labour demand and supply mismatches across countries and the critical developmental role that remittances play. In this context, it is also necessary to enhance regional consultations to address the protection of rights of migrant workers in accordance with internationally agreed principles, as appropriate, as well as applicable national laws, regulations and policies.

9. Intraregional tourism, which has been growing in Asia and the Pacific as a consequence of the region's progress in raising standards of living and reducing poverty, could help spur development in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in the region. However, the development of the tourism sector is highly dependent on the existence of efficient, regular and affordable air services connecting recipient and source countries. Regional cooperation in this area is particularly important in order to support these countries in promoting the development of their tourism sectors.

B. The development of seamless connectivity in the region

10. In order to strengthen seamless transport connectivity in the region, it is essential, as appropriate, to implement the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific,[7] and the Regional Action Programme for Transport

[6] The word "equitable" refers to the principle of special and differential treatment in favour of weaker economies, as included in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

[7] Commission resolution 68/4, annex.

Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016),[8] the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport,[9] the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration,[10] and the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific.[11] It is also important for ESCAP members and associate members that have not already done so, to consider becoming parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network,[12] the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network[13] and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports.[14]

11. In view of the critical importance of the connectivity agenda, one of the four area-specific expert working groups will take a closer look at cross-sectoral synergies among transport, energy, and information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and make recommendations.

12. The Asian and Pacific Energy Forum could address the need to develop energy connectivity by facilitating the evolution of an "Asian energy highway", including oil and gas pipelines and grid connections across borders, to exploit demand-supply mismatches among countries and to further develop a regional energy market and a Pacific regional energy data repository for sustainable energy for all. In view of the importance of energy cooperation for the energy security of the region, the Forum could consider means of implementing a review mechanism for its recommendations. The Forum could also enhance cooperation among energy-producing, transit and energy-consuming countries for the sustainable use of resources.

13. Improved ICT connectivity and the reduction of the digital divide may require enhanced cooperation at the regional and subregional levels in such activities as entering into public-private partnerships, exploring new opportunities emerging from technological innovations and connectivity and supporting the development of regional initiatives for ICT connectivity set forth in Commission resolution 69/10 in order to provide seamless broadband connectivity and reduce the costs of such connectivity for all throughout Asia and the Pacific. Improved regional cooperation on ICT issues could also promote policies that maximize the economic and social benefits of improved ICT connectivity, while mitigating the common challenges and threats raised by new and continuously evolving technologies.

C. Enhancing financial cooperation

14. It is important to recognize the large potential for cooperation in finance in order to develop the region's capital markets and a regional financial architecture to facilitate the mobilization of financial resources for meeting the need for liquidity support and trade finance and to close the infrastructure gaps. One of the four area-specific expert working groups could examine ways and means of exploiting the potential of financial cooperation in Asia and the Pacific, including considering options suggested in paragraph 5(f) of Commission resolution 69/6 on the implementation of the Tehran Declaration to promote public-private partnership in infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development.

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[8] Ibid., appendix I.

[9] Ibid., appendix II.

[10] See E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/7, chap. I, sect. A.

[11] See E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/6.

[12] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

[13] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2596, No. 46171.

[14] Commission resolution 69/7, annex.

D. Increasing economic cooperation to address shared vulnerabilities, risks and challenges

15. One of the four area-specific expert working groups could explore ways and means to foster regional cooperation for addressing shared vulnerabilities, risks and challenges, including the measures discussed in the following paragraphs.

16. The establishment of an Asian and Pacific agricultural research and innovation network could be considered to serve as a regional knowledge network aimed at addressing sustainable productivity increases and encouraging responsible investment in sustainable small-scale farming, agro-industries and rural development.

17. Regional and subregional food banks, such as that created by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' ASEAN-Plus-Three Emergency Rice Reserve, could be strengthened. It is important for countries to share information on food stocks and to facilitate food trade through information-sharing related to sanitary and phytosanitary and other food safety standards, agricultural good practices and trading opportunities.

18. The Zero Hunger Challenge[15] could provide a guideline for regional cooperation in the area of food security. Regional cooperation is particularly necessary to assist countries with special needs, such as least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

19. While increased connectivity facilitates cross-border flows of trade and investment, it also raises the risks of transboundary shocks, which could have serious impacts on social, economic and environmental infrastructure and processes across countries of the region and could lead to systemic failures. In that context, it is important to recognize the role of relevant mechanisms for regional cooperation and coordination and in facilitating the sharing of best practices across the subregions.

20. The role of regional cooperation in ICT and space technologies for the monitoring of hazards and the assessment of vulnerabilities, exposures and risks should be recognized. Regional cooperation, such as through the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development and regional disaster management support systems, such as Sentinel Asia, could also help members and associate members mainstream disaster risk reduction into their development planning, formulate disaster-resilient recovery and reconstruction measures and take into account disaster risks in their land use planning.

21. The pooling of space-based information and ground support as well as communication systems for monitoring and early warning at the regional level should be considered in order to address multiple hazards and cut across geographical boundaries through the sharing of data, information and best practices between national and subregional early warning systems. In this context, it is important to strengthen the Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES).

22. As the scarcity of natural resources is becoming a constraint to the growth of Asian and Pacific economies, there is a need for appropriate and efficient pooling of resources and coordination at the regional and subregional levels with the objective of fostering research and development regarding (a) the conservation of natural resources, including oceans and energy, (b) climate change adaptation and mitigation and (c) the development of environmentally friendly technologies up to the pre-competitive stage. This could be achieved through greater coordination among national innovation agencies in Asian and Pacific countries and through the establishment of regional innovation centres for different core technologies. The role of ESCAP regional institutions, such as the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, the Asian and Pacific Training

[15] See www.un.org/en/zerohunger.

Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development, the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture, and the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization, needs to be recognized in this respect.

23. A number of members and associate members of the Commission are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as the contamination of freshwater tables by rising levels of seawater, the increased frequency and severity of cyclones, rising of sea levels and the melting of snow caps resulting in flash floods and outburst of glacier lakes. These impacts expose them to the risk of suffering significant damage to their physical infrastructure and productive capacity, which could strain government resources and exacerbate development challenges. Sharing of experiences and best practices among members and associate members to build resilience to the impacts of climate change is thus highly desirable. Members and associate members underline the urgency for enhancing the means of implementation to combat the adverse impacts of climate change in this region in accordance with internationally agreed mandates.

Resolution 70/2
Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific,

Reaffirming the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want", in particular the decisions related to disaster risk reduction and the role of the regional commissions in supporting member States and the development agenda,[16]

Recalling General Assembly resolution 67/209 on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in which the Assembly requested the regional commissions, within their mandates, to support the efforts of Member States to achieve disaster risk reduction as part of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,[17]

Also recalling General Assembly resolution 68/211 on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in which the Assembly: (a) encouraged the further implementation of all priorities for action of the Hyogo Framework for Action, including the establishment of reliable disaster statistics; (b) set out the objectives of the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Sendai, Japan, from 14 to 18 March 2015, among which was the completion of the assessment and review of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action; and (c) requested the organizations of the United Nations system to actively contribute to the preparatory process and to the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction itself,

Recalling its resolutions 64/2 on regional cooperation in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in Asia and the Pacific, 67/11 on strengthening statistical capacity in Asia and the Pacific, and 69/12 on enhancing regional cooperation for building resilience to disasters in Asia and the Pacific,

Stressing the importance of disaggregated data related to disasters in enabling a comprehensive assessment of the socioeconomic effects of disasters and strengthening evidence-based policymaking at all levels for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation,

[16] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

[17] A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

Taking note with appreciation of the efforts of the secretariat, in coordination with other entities of the United Nations system, to promote disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific,

Having considered the report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its third session,[18] in particular the recommendation that the secretariat work towards monitoring more effectively the resilience of member States to disasters, including through the development of a core set of disaster-related statistics in close coordination with the Committee on Statistics,

1. *Invites* members and associate members, in collaboration with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, donors, and international and regional organizations as appropriate, to build and assess their resilience to and capacity to deal with disasters through, among other measures, the improvement of disaster-related statistics,

2. *Decides* to establish an expert group comprising statisticians and disaster risk reduction experts to work towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics to be approved by the Commission,

3. *Also decides* that the expert group shall report on the progress made in developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics to the Committee on Statistics in 2014 and the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015,

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to support the work of the expert group, including by soliciting nominations from Governments, and convening and servicing the meetings of the expert group,

5. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to inform the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction of the work initiated by ESCAP towards developing a basic range of disaster-related statistics,

6. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its seventy-second session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Second plenary meeting
23 May 2014

B. Decisions adopted by the Commission at its seventieth session (Phase I)

Decision 70/1
Report on the evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013

At its second plenary meeting, on 23 May 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific endorsed the report on the evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013 (E/ESCAP/70/20).

Decision 70/2
Programme changes for the biennium 2014-2015

At its second plenary meeting, on 23 May 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific endorsed the programme changes for the biennium 2014-2015 (E/ESCAP/70/21).

Decision 70/3
Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017

At its second plenary meeting, on 23 May 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific endorsed the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/69/6 (Prog. 16)) with the amended text in paragraph 16.35.

[18] E/ESCAP/70/14.

Decision 70/4
Evaluation pursuant to resolution 67/4: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management

At its second plenary meeting, on 23 May 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific took note of the request of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to postpone the evaluation related to the establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management pursuant to its resolution 67/4 (E/ESCAP/70/23), and decided to review the evaluation at its seventy-first session.

Decision 70/5
Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission

At its second plenary meeting, on 23 May 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific took note of the report of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (E/ESCAP/70/24).

Decision 70/6
Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-first session of the Commission (2015)

At its second plenary meeting, on 23 May 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific decided that its seventy-first session would be held in April or May 2015. The actual dates would be determined in consultation with the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission. The Commission also decided that the theme topic for its seventy-first session would be: "Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation".

Decision 70/7
Election of the members of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology

At its second plenary meeting, on 23 May 2014, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific elected, in addition to the host country, India, the following 13 countries to the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology for the period 2014-2017: Bangladesh; China; Fiji; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Malaysia; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Thailand; and Viet Nam.

Chapter II

Organization of the seventieth session (Phase I) of the Commission

A. Attendance and organization of work

3. Owing to the special circumstances in Bangkok, the seventieth session was held in two phases. Phase I was held at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok on 23 May 2014, and Phase II was scheduled to be held from 4 to 8 August 2014.

4. The session was attended by representatives of the following members:

Australia
Bangladesh
Bhutan
China
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
France
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Japan
Kazakhstan
Lao People's Democratic Republic
Malaysia
Mongolia
Myanmar
Nepal
Pakistan
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Russian Federation
Sri Lanka
Thailand
Turkey
Tuvalu
United States of America
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Viet Nam

5. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies attended: United Nations Development Programme; and United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

6. Representatives of the following specialized agencies were present in a consultative capacity: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; International Telecommunication Union; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and World Health Organization.

7. The following intergovernmental organizations attended as observers: Asian Development Bank; and Mekong River Commission.

8. In accordance with rule 13 of its rules of procedure, the Commission elected Mr. Kazi Imtiaz Hossain (Bangladesh) as Chair of Phase I. Ms. Jocelyn S. Batoon-Garcia (Philippines) and Mr. Veali Vagi (Papua New Guinea) were elected Vice-Chairs of Phase I.

9. The Executive Secretary delivered a welcome statement.

B. Agenda

10. The Commission adopted the following agenda:

Senior officials segment

1. Opening of the session:

   (a) Opening addresses;

   (b) Election of officers;

   (c) Adoption of the agenda.

2. Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and Pacific Island Developing Countries:

   (a) Preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, Samoa, 2014;

   (b) Sustainable management of oceans for sustainable development and poverty eradication;

   (c) Development issues relevant to least developed countries;

   (d) Development issues relevant to landlocked developing countries;

   (e) The perspectives of Asia-Pacific least developed, landlocked developing and Pacific island developing countries in the context of the development agenda beyond 2015;

   (f) Other matters.

3. Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions:

   (a) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development;

   (b) Trade and investment;

   (c) Transport;

   (d) Environment and development;

   (e) Information and communications technology;

   (f) Disaster risk reduction;

   (g) Social development;

   (h) Statistics;

   (i) Subregional activities for development.

4. Management issues:

   (a) Report on the evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013;

   (b) Programme changes for the biennium 2014-2015;

   (c) Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017;

   (d) Technical cooperation activities of ESCAP and announcement of intended contributions.

5. Evaluation pursuant to resolution 67/4: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management.

6. Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission.

7. Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-first session of the Commission (2015).

Ministerial segment

8. Policy issues for the Asia-Pacific region:

(a) Key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2014.

9. Theme topic for the seventieth session of the Commission: "Regional connectivity for shared prosperity".

10. Other matters.

11. Adoption of the report of the Commission.

11. The following agenda items were considered at Phase I:

3. Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions:

(a) Macroeconomic policy, poverty reduction and inclusive development;

4. Management issues:

(a) Report on the evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013;

(b) Programme changes for the biennium 2014-2015;

(c) Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017;

5. Evaluation pursuant to resolution 67/4: Establishment of the Asian and Pacific centre for the development of disaster information management;

6. Activities of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission;

7. Dates, venue and theme topic for the seventy-first session of the Commission (2015);

10. Other matters;

11. Adoption of the report of the Commission.

C. Adoption of the report of the Commission

12. The report on Phase I of the seventieth session was adopted at the second plenary meeting on 23 May 2014.

Annex I

Statement of programme budget implications of actions and proposals of the Commission

1. The requests contained in the resolutions listed below will have no additional programme budget implications for the approved programme budget for 2014-2015:[a]

(a) Resolution 70/1: Implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific;

(b) Resolution 70/2: Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific.

2. Extrabudgetary resources, where appropriate, will be sought for the implementation of the activities required under the above-mentioned resolutions.

[a] See General Assembly resolution 68/248 A-C.

Annex II

Meetings of subsidiary bodies and other intergovernmental bodies held since the sixty-ninth session of the Commission

	Subsidiary bodies and officers		Session	Document symbol of report
		Committees		
I.	**Committee on Environment and Development**		**Third session** Bangkok 29-31 October 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/13**
	Chair	Mr. Bektas Mukhametzhanov (Kazakhstan)		
	Vice-Chairs	Ms. Sukontha Aekaraj (Thailand) Mr. Dae Young Ju (Republic of Korea)		
	Rapporteur	Mr. Dornath Aryal (Nepal)		
II.	**Committee on Trade and Investment**		**Third session** Bangkok 20-22 November 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/9**
	Chair	Mr. Sajjad Ahmad (Pakistan)		
	Vice-Chair	Ms. Karo Rupa (Papua New Guinea)		
	Rapporteur	Ms. Tekreth Kamrang (Cambodia)		
III.	**Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction**		**Third sesssion** Bangkok 27-29 November 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/14**
	Chair	Ms. Fathimath Tashneem (Maldives)		
	Vice-Chairs	Mr. Namgay Wangchuk (Bhutan) Mr. Pita Tagicakiwera (Fiji)		
		Governing councils of ESCAP regional institutions		
I.	**Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization**		**Ninth session** Bangkok 19 November 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/11/Rev.1**
	Chair	Mr. Wais Kabir (Bangladesh)		
	Vice-Chair	Mr. Kanchan K. Singh (India)		
II.	**Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development**		**Eighth session** Incheon, Republic of Korea 12 December 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/15**
	Chair	Mr. Rajendra Kumar (India)		
	Vice-Chair	Ms. Maria Lourdez Aquilizan (Philippines)		

	Subsidiary bodies and officers	Session	Document symbol of report
III.	**Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology**	**Ninth session** Bangkok 19 November 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/10**
	Chair — Mr. Indu Bhaskar (India)		
	Vice-Chair — Mr. Bambang Subiyanto (Indonesia)		
IV.	**Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific**	**Ninth session** Chiba, Japan 19-20 November 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/18**
	Chair — Mr. Suryamin (Indonesia)		
	Vice-Chair — Mr. Takao Itou (Japan)		
V.	**Governing Council of the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture**	**Tenth session** Bangkok 13 December 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/8**
	Chair — Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad (Pakistan)		
	Vice-Chair — Mr. Raghunath Dnyanu Ghodake (Papua New Guinea)		
	Intergovernmental meetings		
I.	**Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference**	Bangkok 16-20 September 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/16**
	Senior officials segment		
	Chair — Mr. Keshav Desiraju (India)		
	Vice-Chair — Ms. Janette Garin (Philippines)		
	Rapporteur — Dr. Tenneth Dalipanda (Solomon Islands)		
	Ministerial segment		
	Chair — Mr. Anote Tong (Kiribati)		
	Vice-Chairs — Mr. Ahmad Jan Naeem (Afghanistan) Mr. Hukum Khan Habibi (Afghanistan) Ms. Sayeda Mostafavi (Afghanistan) Ms. Meher Afroze (Bangladesh) Ms. Bin Li (China) Mr. Nandi Tuaine Glassie (Cook Islands) Ms. Jiko Luveni (Fiji) Mr. Kenya Akiba (Japan) Ms. Toshiko Abe (Japan) Mr. Somchit Inthamith (Lao People's Democratic Republic) Datuk Hjh. Azizah Datuk Seri Panglima Hj. Mohd. Dun (Malaysia) Mr. Abdulla Jihad (Maldives)		

Subsidiary bodies and officers		Session	Document symbol of report
	Mr. Erdene Sodnomzundui (Mongolia) Mr. Amarsanaa Jazag (Mongolia) Mr. Vidyadhar Mallik (Nepal) Ms. Joan Sisiati Tahafa Viliamu (Niue) Ms. Zakia Shah Nawaz (Pakistan) Mr. Sergio Gama Da Costa Lobo (Timor-Leste) Mr. Rialuth Serge Vohor (Vanuatu) Mr. Tien Nguyen Viet (Viet Nam)		
Rapporteur:	Dr. Fasli Jalal (Indonesia)		
II. Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport		**Second session** Bangkok 4-8 November 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/12**
Senior officials segment			
Chair	Mr. Sudarshan Ram Bhandary (Nepal)		
Vice-Chairs	Mr. Vasim Sorya (Cambodia) Mr. Erdem Direkler (Turkey)		
Rapporteur	Mr. Farid Valiyev (Azerbaijan)		
Ministerial segment			
Chair	Mr. Chadchart Sittipunt (Thailand)		
Vice-Chairs	Mr. Hrant Beglaryan (Armenia) Mr. D.N. Dungyel (Bhutan) Mr. Tauch Chankosol (Cambodia) Mr. Fukui Ning (China) Mr. Bambang Susantono (Indonesia) Mr. Abbas Ahmad Akhoundi (Islamic Republic of Iran) Mr. Yoshitaka Toui (Japan) Mr. Sommad Pholsena (Lao People's Democratic Republic) Mr. Ab. Aziz Kaprawi (Malaysia) Mr. Gansukh Amarjargal (Mongolia) Mr. Myint Thein (Myanmar) Mr. Chhabi Raj Pant (Nepal) Mr. Hyung Koo Yeo (Republic of Korea) Mr. Alexey Tsydenov (Russian Federation) Mr. Nizom Hakimov (Tajikistan) Mr. Nguyen Hong Truong (Viet Nam)		
Rapporteur	Mr. Abul Kashem Md. Badrul Majid (Bangladesh)		
III. Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific		Bangkok 17-20 December 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/7**
Senior Officials Segment			
Chair	Mr. Kazi Imtiaz Hossain (Bangladesh)		
Vice-Chairs	Mr. Nik Azman Nik Abdul Majid (Malaysia) Ms. Pilimilose Balwyn Fa'otusia (Tonga)		

Subsidiary bodies and officers		Session	Document symbol of report
Ministerial Segment			
Chair	Mr. Faumuina Tiatia Liuga (Samoa)		
Vice-Chairs	Mr. Ly Thuch (Cambodia) Mr. E.M. Sudarsana Natchiappan (India) Mr. Mohamed Saeed (Maldives) Mr. Rabindra Kumar Shakya (Nepal) Ms. Emilia Valerio Pires (Timor-Leste)		
IV. Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on a Regional Arrangement for the Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade		Bangkok, 22-24 April 2014	**E/ESCAP/70/31**
Chair	Mr. Toya Narayan Gyawali (Nepal)		
Vice-Chair	Mr. Khemdeth Sihavong (Lao People's Democratic Republic)		
Rapporteur	Mr. Mahmood Zargar (Islamic Republic of Iran)		
V. Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia		**Eighth session** Almaty, Kazakhstan 19-21 November 2013	**E/ESCAP/70/19**
Chair	Mr. Timur Zhaksylykov (Kazakhstan)		

Annex III

Publications and documents

A. Publications issued since the sixty-ninth session*

Executive direction and management

ESCAP Meeting Documents, 2012 ** ESCAP/LIB/SER.F/32.

What's Ahead @ ESCAP **

Subprogramme 1
Macroeconomic policy and inclusive development[a]

Asia-Pacific Development Journal

Vol. 20, No. 1, June 2013. ST/ESCAP/2663.

Asia-Pacific Regional MDG Report 2012/2013: Asia-Pacific Aspirations: Perspectives for a Post-2015 Development Agenda. ESCAP, ADB and UNDP, August 2013.

CAPSA Fact Sheet**

No. 07/2013. Agricultural research-extension linkages in Asia and the Pacific.

No. 08/2013. Role of policies in agricultural transformation: lessons from Brazil and the Republic of Korea.

CAPSA Working Paper**

No. 106, 2012. The role of policies in agricultural transformation: lessons from Brazil, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea.

Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2013: Year-end Update. ST/ESCAP/2649.

MPDD Policy Briefs**

No. 11, June 2013. Providing employment for all.

No.12, June 2013. Coping with volatile capital flows in Asia and the Pacific.

No.13, July 2013. Developmental macroeconomics.

No.14, July 2013. Forward-looking macroeconomic policies – re-examining inflation and debt limits.

No.15, July 2013. Facing a sluggish and volatile global economy.

No.16, August 2013. Minimum wage policies to boost inclusive growth.

No.17, September 2013. Making emerging Asia-Pacific less vulnerable to global financial panics.

No.18, December 2013. Providing income security for the elderly.

No.19, January 2014. Governments can use sustainable public procurement to foster inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

MPDD Working Papers**

WP/13/01, April 2013. Policies for structural transformation: an analysis of the Asia-Pacific.

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* Where applicable, the ESCAP document symbol and (in parentheses) United Nations publication sales numbers are noted. A double asterisk (**) denotes publications that are available online only.

[a] Including the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA).

Palawija News (CAPSA):

Vol. 30, No. 1, August 2013.

- Adoption of new rice varieties in Sri Lanka.
- Indonesia rice check procedure: an approach for accelerating the adoption of ICM.

Vol. 30, No. 2, August 2013.

- Preparing rice farmers for climate change direct seeded rice in India.
- Mitigating climate change and soil salinity impacts in the Indus Basin using skimming wells with pressurized irrigation.

Vol. 30, No. 3, December 2013. Sustainable management of water scarcity in the Asia-Pacific region using virtual water trade through agricultural products.

Subprogramme 2
Trade and investment[b]

A Handbook on Negotiating Preferential Trade Agreements: Services Liberalization. July 2013. ST/ESCAP/2657.

APTIAD Briefing Note**

No. 6, December 2013. Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement: promoting trade, investment and business linkages.

ARTNet Census Briefing Paper**

No. 1, March 2013. The European Union's new timber regulations and the Asia-Pacific: rationales, due diligence procedures, and green lanes.

*ARTNeT Newsletter***

July 2013
August 2013
September 2013
November 2013
December 2013

ARTNeT Working Papers**

No. 124, February 2013. Intellectual property rights in regional trade agreements of Asia-Pacific economies.

No. 125, June 2013. Inclusive growth experiences – the case of Nepal: a discussion on a paradox from conventional and holistic perspectives.

No. 126, June 2013. Labour productivity and export performance: firm-level evidence from Indian manufacturing industries since 1991.

No. 127, June 2013. Trade costs and impacts of trade facilitation on manufacturing exports by Thailand.

No. 128, August 2013. Papua New Guinea and the natural resource curse.

No. 129, September 2013. Who profits from trade facilitation initiatives?

No. 130, September 2013. Addressing non-tariff measures in ASEAN.

No. 131, September 2013. Trade facilitation and poverty reduction in Asia and the Pacific: a case study of a South Asian Economic Corridor.

No. 132, October 2013. Trade facilitation and microfinance for poverty reduction in the Greater Mekong Subregion: a case study of Thailand.

No. 133, October 2013. Ongoing trade facilitation improvement: its impact on export-oriented small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia.

[b] Including the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) and the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM).

No. 134, October 2013. Impact of EPZs on poverty reduction and trade facilitation in Sri Lanka.

No. 135, October 2013. Trade facilitation and poverty reduction: China-ASEAN region case study.

No. 136, November 2013. Prospects of the Bali Ministerial Conference.

No. 137, December 2013. Compulsory licensing: India's maiden experience.

No. 138, December 2013. Developing inland China: do heterogeneous coastal foreign direct investments and exports help?

No. 139, January 2014. Effects of environmental regulations on South Asian food and agricultural exports: a gravity analysis.

Asia-Pacific Tech Monitor (APCTT):

Vol. 29, No. 1, January-March 2012. Enhancing regional economic integration through national innovation systems.

Asia-Pacific Trade Agreements Database**

Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2013: Turning the Tide: Towards Inclusive Trade and Investment. December 2012. ST/ESCAP/2668. (Sales No. E.14.II.F.2)

CSAM Policy Brief**

No. 1, January 2014. Analysis of the trends of agricultural mechanization development in China (2000-2020).

Designing and Implementing Trade Facilitation in Asia and the Pacific, 2013 Update. 6 September 2013.

Expansion of Global Value Chains in Asian Developing Countries: Automotive Case Study in the Mekong Subregion. ST/ESCAP/2677.

Expert Database (UNNExT) **

Impacts of trade facilitation measures on poverty and inclusive growth: case studies from Asia. A study by the Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade (ARTNeT). ST/ESCAP/2687.

Studies in Trade and Investment**

No. 78. Enhancing regional connectivity: towards a regional arrangement for the facilitation of cross-border paperless trade. 31 December 2013. ST/ESCAP/2684.

No. 79. Responsible business and sustainable investment in the natural resources sector in Asia and the Pacific. ST/ESCAP/2680.

*Regional Organizations Cooperation Mechanism for Trade Facilitation (ROC-TF) Newsletter***

No. IV, 31 July 2013.

No. V, 31 January 2014.

Towards a National Integrated and Sustainable Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism: BPA+. 2 January 2014. ST/ESCAP/2683.

Trade and Investment Working Paper Series**

No. 01/14, 27 January 2014. Trade facilitation potential of Asian transit agreements in the context of the WTO negotiations.

No. 02/13, November 2013. What complementary policies may contribute to the inclusiveness of international openness?

No. 03/13, November 2013. Vanuatu Cocoa Growers' Association: inclusive growth in rural smallholders agriculture.

No. 04/13, November 2013. Dealing with challenges for making trade inclusive.

UNNExT Brief**

No. 9, August 2013. Towards an enabling environment for paperless trade - Pan Asian e-commerce Alliance (PAA): service providers join forces to enable cross-border paperless trade.

VATIS Update: Biotechnology. (APCTT):**

Vol. 1, No. 118, April-June 2013.

Vol. 1, No. 119, July-September 2013.

Vol. 1, No. 120, October-December 2013.

VATIS Update: Food Processing (APCTT):**

Vol. 3, No. 114, October-December 2012.

Vol. 3, No. 115, January - March 2013.

Vol. 3, No. 116, April-June 2013.

Vol. 3, No. 117, July-September 2013.

Vol. 3, No. 118, October-December 2013.

VATIS Update: Non-conventional Energy (APCTT):**

Vol. 2, No. 115, October-December 2012.

Vol. 2, No. 116, January - March 2013.

Vol. 2, No. 117, April-June 2013.

Vol. 2, No. 118, July-September 2013.

Vol. 2, No. 119, October-December 2013.

VATIS Update: Ozone Layer Protection (APCTT):**

Vol. 4, No. 115, November-December 2012.

Vol. 4, No. 116, January - February 2013.

Vol. 4, No. 117, March - April 2013.

Vol. 4, No. 118, May - June 2013.

Vol. 4, No. 119, July - August 2013.

Vol. 4, No. 120, September - October 2013.

Vol. 4, No. 121, November-December 2013.

VATIS Update: Waste Management (APCTT):**

Vol. 5, No. 111, October-December 2012.

Vol. 5, No. 112, January - March 2013.

Vol. 5, No. 113, April-June 2013.

Vol. 5, No. 114, July-September 2013.

Vol. 5, No. 115, October-December 2013.

Subprogramme 3
Transport

Guide to Key Issues in Development of Logistics Policy, 17 December 2013.**

Monograph Series on Transport Facilitation of International Railway Transport in Asia and the Pacific, 19 December 2013. ST/ESCAP/2681.**

Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, Phase II (2012-2016), June 2013.

Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, June 2013.

Review of Developments in Transport in Asia and the Pacific 2013. ST/ESCAP/2667.

Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific[**]

No. 82, 17 December 2013. Combatting congestion. ST/ESCAP/SER.E/82.

No. 83, 20 December 2013. Designing safer roads. ST/ESCAP/SER.E/83.

Subprogramme 4
Environment and development

Advancing Sustainable Energy: UN-Energy Asia-Pacific. Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (APEF), Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 27-30 May 2013.

Discussion Paper[**]

Development financing for tangible results: a paradigm shift to impact investing and outcome models, the case of sanitation in Asia, 1 August 2013.

The status of the water-food-energy nexus in Asia and the Pacific, August 2013.

Green Growth Indicators: A Practical Approach for Asia and the Pacific. Greening of Economic Growth Series, December 2013. ST/ESCAP/2674.

Ministerial Declaration and Plan of Action on Regional Cooperation for Enhanced Energy Security and the Sustainable Use of Energy in Asia and the Pacific. Adopted at the Asian and Pacific Energy Forum (APEF), Vladivostok, Russian Federation, 27-30 May 2013.

Partnerships for Universal Access to Modern Energy Services: A Global Assessment Report on Public-private Renewable Energy Partnerships, December 2013. ST/ESCAP/2664.

Shifting from Quantity to Quality: Growth with Equality, Efficiency, Sustainability and Dynamism, December 2013. ST/ESCAP/2675.

Statistical Perspective: Focus Areas for Realizing Enhanced Energy Security, May 2013.

Subprogramme 5
Information and communications technology and disaster risk reduction[c]

An in-depth study of broadband infrastructure in the ASEAN region, ICT and Development Section, August 2013.[**]

APCICT Knowledge Sharing Series, Issue III: GCIO Development in Developing Countries, November 2013.

Discussion paper series on problems and challenges in transit connectivity routes and international gateways in Asia. Discussion Paper Series 2014/1.

ESCAP Technical Paper[**]

Assessing the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society in Asia and the Pacific: regional survey and review by the ESCAP secretariat.

Improving disaster data and statistics on vulnerable groups: contributing to building a resilient Asia-Pacific region.

Regional issues in disaster risk reduction, including those related to climate change adaptation, and policies related to mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into socioeconomic development planning.

The resilience of ICT infrastructure and its role during disasters.

[c] Including the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT).

Sound practices in space technology applications for disaster risk reduction and inclusive and sustainable development.

Space applications for improving disaster management.

ICT, Climate Change and Green Growth. Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders, Module 10. (APCICT)

Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit. Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders. (APCICT)

The Primer Series on ICTD for Youth: (APCICT)

Primer 2: Project management and ICTD.

Primer 3: ICT for disaster risk management.

Primer 4: ICT, climate change and green growth.

Subprogramme 6
Social development

Factsheets**

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 12 January 2013.

Youth in Asia-Pacific, 12 November 2012.

Income support schemes in Pacific island countries: a brief overview, 26 December 2013.**

Inter-Regional Report on Labour Migration and Social Protection. ESCWA and ESCAP. New York: United Nations, 2013. E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical paper.2.

Population and development factsheets for Asia-Pacific, November 2013**

Facts and trends in sexual and reproductive health in Asia and the Pacific.

International migration and development in Asia and the Pacific.

Population trends in Asia and the Pacific.

Preparing for ageing societies in Asia and the Pacific.

Urbanization trends in Asia and the Pacific

Sustaining Progress on Population and Development in Asia and the Pacific: 20 years after ICPD, ST/ESCAP/2670.

Subprogramme 7
Statistics

Data visualization: selected demographic indicators (1980-2050).**

Data visualization: time-series (1990-2012).**

Online statistical database.**

*Statistical Newsletter***

Second quarter 2013, 5 July 2013.

Third quarter 2013, 3 October 2013.

Fourth quarter 2013, 20 December 2013.

Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2013, 3 December 2013. ST/ESCAP/2665. (Sales No. E.13.II.F.1)

Subprogramme 8
Subregional activities for development

Connections, ESCAP in North-East Asia (SRO-ENEA)**

No. 6, March-April 2013.

No. 7, May-June 2013.

No. 8, July-August 2013.

No. 9, September-October 2013.

No. 10, November-December 2013.

Doing Business with Afghanistan: Harnessing Afghanistan's Economic Potential, November 2013.

International migration in South and South-West Asia: the case for regional perspective and policy. ESCAP-SSWA Policy Brief Series No. 2, May 2013.**

North and Central Asian Observer **

No. 1, March 2013.

No. 2, April 2013.

No. 3, May 2013.

No. 4, June 2013.

No. 5, August 2013.

South and South-West Asia Development Monitor **

No. 15, April 2013.

No. 16, May 2013.

No. 17, June-July 2013.

No. 18, August 2013.

No. 19, September 2013.

No. 20, October 2013.

No. 21, November 2013.

No. 22, December 2013-January 2014.

South and South-West Asia Development Papers **

No. 1304, May 2013. Creating an enabling environment for women's entrepreneurship in India.

No. 1305, July 2013. Economic Integration in the "Heart of Asia": South Asia-Central Asia linkages.

No. 1306, September 2013. How much do small old age pensions and windows' pensions help the poor in India? An ex-post evaluation of the National Social Assistance Programme and implications for its planned reform.

No. 1307, November 2013. Regional cooperation for strengthening national food security strategies in South Asia: a policy agenda.

Towards Seamless Connectivity in South and South-West Asia, August 2013.

B. Documents submitted to the Commission at its sixty-seventh session

Document symbol	Document title	Agenda item
	Limited documents	
E/ESCAP/70/L.1/Rev.1	Provisional agenda	1(c)
E/ESCAP/70/L.2/Rev.2	Annotated provisional agenda	1(c)
E/ESCAP/70/L.3 and Add.1	Draft report	-
E/ESCAP/70/L.4	Draft resolution: Implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific	3(a)
E/ESCAP/70/L.5	Draft resolution: Disaster-related statistics in Asia and the Pacific	10
E/ESCAP/70/L.6	Draft decisions	-
	Regular documents	
E/ESCAP/70/1	Summary of preparations for the Pacific for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States	2(a)
E/ESCAP/70/2	Sustainable management of oceans and seas for sustainable development and poverty eradication in Pacific small island developing States	2(b)
E/ESCAP/70/3	Summary of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 in the Asia-Pacific Region	2(c)
E/ESCAP/70/4	Summary of the status of implementation of the Vientiane Consensus	2(d)
E/ESCAP/70/5 and Corr.1	Subprogramme overview: Issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	3
E/ESCAP/70/6	Summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions	3
E/ESCAP/70/7	Report of the Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific	3(a)
E/ESCAP/70/8	Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for the Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture on its tenth session	3(a)
E/ESCAP/70/9	Report of the Committee on Trade and Investment on its third session	3(b)
E/ESCAP/70/10	Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology on its ninth session	3(b)
E/ESCAP/70/11/Rev.1	Report of the Governing Council of the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization on its ninth session	3(b)
E/ESCAP/70/12	Report of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport on its second session	3(c)
E/ESCAP/70/13	Report of the Committee on Environment and Development on its third session	3(d)
E/ESCAP/70/14	Report of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction on its third session	3(f)
E/ESCAP/70/15	Report of the Governing Council of the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development on its eighth session	3(f)

Document symbol	Document title	Agenda item
E/ESCAP/70/16	Report of the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference	3(g)
E/ESCAP/70/17	Road map for the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific	3(g)
E/ESCAP/70/18	Report of the Governing Council of the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific on its ninth session	3(h)
E/ESCAP/70/19	Report of the Governing Council of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia on its eighth session	3(i)
E/ESCAP/70/20	Report on the evaluation activities of ESCAP during the biennium 2012-2013	4(a)
E/ESCAP/70/21	Programme changes for the biennium 2014-2015	4(b)
A/69/6 (Prog. 16)	Proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017, part two: biennial programme plan, economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific	4(c)
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Policy issues for the Asia-Pacific region: key challenges to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific

Summary of the Outcomes of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present document summarizes outcomes and policy discussions of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, which was held in Pattaya, Thailand, from 19 to 21 May 2014, and the Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing, which was held in Jakarta from 10 to 11 June 2014. Several critical development challenges were discussed at those meetings, especially those related to fostering sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific and financing programmes to support inclusive and sustainable growth. Government representatives at those meetings suggested that ESCAP should provide a platform to hold consultations and support regional deliberations on the development agenda beyond 2015 and on the means for implementing sustainable development goals by underscoring the need for new and innovative sources of financing.

The Commission may wish to deliberate on the development challenges and policy proposals contained in the present document and provide the secretariat with guidance on its recommendations and on any other matters concerning the shaping and financing of the development agenda beyond 2015.

I. Introduction

1. The Asia-Pacific region has experienced a substantial decline in income poverty in recent decades. Between 1990 and 2011, the incidence of extreme poverty (less than $1.25 a day) dropped from 1.6 billion to 743 million persons. At the same time, large numbers of people live just above the extreme poverty line. The vulnerability of such people is exacerbated by inadequate social protection and the lack of financial inclusion. Moreover, development challenges have had impacts on the

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** The present document was submitted late because the Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing was held in June 2014, and time was needed to finalize its outcome document.

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economies in the region. These include: eradicating poverty and narrowing inequality; infrastructure shortages; inadequate expansion of good-quality jobs in the formal sector; conditions that adversely affect gender equality and women's empowerment; the need to build resilience to multiple shocks; responding to population dynamics and urbanization; enhancing resource efficiency and natural resource management; and addressing climate change. As a result, a critical challenge will be the fostering of sustainable development and exploring the financial resources and mechanisms to implement financing for programmes to support inclusive growth.

2. Following the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, the high-level political forum on sustainable development was established "as the guardian of the sustainable development agenda" and in response to the need for reforming the institutional framework for sustainable development. Through resolution 67/290, the General Assembly underlined the regional dimension of sustainable development by inviting the regional commissions to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum, including through annual regional meetings, involving relevant regional entities, major groups and other stakeholders, as appropriate.

3. In 2013, the General Assembly decided to establish an intergovernmental committee of experts on sustainable development financing, as called for in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want".[1] That committee would implement an intergovernmental process, which would "assess financing needs, consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks and evaluate additional initiatives, with a view to preparing a report proposing options on an effective sustainable financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives". The intergovernmental committee would conclude its work by 2014. The Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing was intended to offer perspectives on financial market developments and some key issues and challenges facing the region in financing sustainable development and other priorities.

4. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, which was held in Pattaya, Thailand, from 19 to 21 May 2014, was attended by more than 277 participants, including 161 representatives of Governments[2] from 32 ESCAP member States, namely Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan, Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Turkey; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam. Also attending the meeting were 36 representatives from international and United Nations organizations and other entities in addition to 61 representatives from the private sector and stakeholder organizations.

5. The Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing, which was held in Jakarta from 10 to 11 June 2014, was attended

[1] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

[2] Including 3 ministers, 2 vice-ministers and 14 high-level officials, such as ambassadors, directors-general, joint secretaries and permanent representatives.

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by more than 150 participants, including 70 representatives of Governments[3] from 28 ESCAP member States, namely Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; India; Indonesia; Japan; Kiribati; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Myanmar; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Tonga; Turkey; Tuvalu; United States of America; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam, as well as 2 from outside the region, namely Germany and Switzerland. There were also 30 representatives from international and United Nations organizations and other entities, and 50 representatives from the private sector, civil society organizations and other stakeholder organizations.

6. The meetings expressed deep appreciation to the Governments and people of Thailand and Indonesia for hosting the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing, respectively.[4]

II. Brief review of key issues and policy discussions

A. Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development

7. The participants in the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development emphasized the need for greater attention to region-specific priorities, including, among others: disaster risk reduction and resilience; addressing the vulnerability of small island developing States and of marginalized groups; employment generation, particularly for youth; a rights-based approached to migration; urbanization and the "demographic dividend"; deepening regional integration and connectivity, including affordable access to information and communications technology (ICT); and a focus on inclusive, balanced and sustained economic growth that respects the nine "planetary boundaries" identified by the Stockholm Resilience Centre.

8. It was noted at the meeting that unique regional priorities need to be further strengthened in the global deliberations of the 30-member Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals and the intergovernmental high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

9. The participants identified key strategies for implementation of sustainable development objectives, including: building a low-carbon society; advocating resource productivity; improving food security through sustainable agriculture; fostering education for sustainable development; strengthening integrated water resources management; and building a green economy in the context of poverty eradication.

10. The meeting underscored the importance of critical policy issues related to the means of implementation, including financing for sustainable development; science, technology, and innovation; rule-based and equitable

[3] Including 13 ministers/deputy ministers of finance, planning and/or investment, and 5 central bank governors/deputy-governors.

[4] The documents related to the two meetings are available on the ESCAP website: those for the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development at www.unescap.org/events/ apfsd, and those for the Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing at www.unescap.org/events/asia-pacific-outreach-meeting-sustainable-development-financing.

multilateral trading systems; strengthened global and South-South partnerships, including with the private sector, for development; and effective governance at all levels for transformation towards sustainable development. The participants also highlighted the need for policies to address ecological sustainability, food sovereignty and universal health coverage, including sexual and reproductive health rights without discrimination.

11. The participants encouraged ESCAP to strengthen its programmes in a number of areas, for example, by: establishing two new committees, one on financing for development and the other on science, technology and innovation; undertaking the development of a regional road map for sustainable development; development of an effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework on progress in the implementation of sustainable development goals; collaborating with United Nations agencies, academia and key stakeholders in establishing a new knowledge platform; further supporting regional cooperation and integration; and providing coherent policy advice.

12. The participants emphasized that the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development platform should provide an important high-level mechanism for the region to realize sustainable development, and bring regional and national voices and perspectives to the global efforts in this regard.

B. Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing

13. The participants in the Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing underscored the need for adopting a framework for sustainable development financing that could analyse the scope and potential of all sources of financing for the region. In particular, policy focus was highlighted in a number of areas, including: the scope for domestic resource mobilization through tax and capital markets; institutional investments, and leveraging those through public-private partnerships; the need for financial inclusion for all; climate finance requirements; external resources, specifically official development assistance and private flows; and efforts to forge new and better partnerships for financing sustainable development.

14. The meeting noted that investments in sustainable development could cost as much as $2.5 trillion per year if the infrastructure gaps in Asia and the Pacific are to be closed. That amount was needed to provide universal access to social protection, health and education, and to implement measures to mitigate climate change. However, that amount represented only 7.5 per cent of the $33 trillion that was being held by affluent individuals in the region at the end of 2012.

15. The meeting emphasized the importance of strengthening the developmental role of fiscal policy in achieving social and environmental goals and reducing inequalities. The participants also noted that the Asia-Pacific region's capital markets needed to be broadened and strengthened to better serve the real economy while recognizing the institutional and regulatory challenges in the least developed countries in the region and the Pacific island developing States. It was emphasized that policies would require the development of domestic institutional investors, such as pension funds and asset management firms, that could support the progress of domestic capital markets by enhancing the demand for financial products and providing liquidity.

16. The meeting recognized the initiative of China in establishing an Asia infrastructure investment bank. It also noted a proposal to create a "passport" for capital, akin to a telephone number that included an international country code which would help to tackle the issues of profit shifting, transfer pricing and money laundering. The meeting further stressed the importance of South-South and triangular development cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region to enhance financing for sustainable development.

17. The participants stressed that ESCAP could conduct studies in such areas as the development of capital markets for small and medium-sized enterprises and social enterprises, social corporate responsibility and the funding of infrastructure in local communities.

III. The way forward

18. The participants in the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development agreed that the Chair's summary, as the main outcome of the meeting, would be brought to the attention of the second meeting of the high-level political forum when it gathered in New York in June/July 2014. The Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development made proposals for regional action on the way forward, including that the Asia-Pacific Forum should be guided by the mandates contained in General Assembly resolution 67/290, and that it should facilitate subregional consultations and processes that support regional deliberations and implementation of the development agenda beyond 2015. Some delegations stated that future sessions of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development should be a stand-alone initiative, and those sessions should be convened in such a manner that they could maximize synergy with ESCAP Commission sessions.

19. The participants in the Asia-Pacific Outreach Meeting on Sustainable Development Financing were of the view that the region would require a financial system that was efficient, fair and predictable, and that cooperation would be needed to secure new and innovative financing at the national and regional levels to fund the development agenda beyond 2015 for the region. They identified the need for creating new regional financial architecture and mechanisms to use regional savings to finance inclusive and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. It was further recognized at the meeting that, in going forward, the region should work collectively to ensure that it nurtured strong and stable financial systems. To achieve that, policymakers and regulators would need to work with the private sector to develop more diversified and balanced financial sectors, which were key to reinforcing financial stability and sustainability, as well as to extending finance to meet people's needs and the region's sustainable development aspirations.

20. The participants in both meetings highlighted the importance of undertaking effective monitoring, evaluation and reporting on progress in the implementation of sustainable development goals and suggested establishment of measurable goals and targets that could capture the multidimensional nature of sustainable development in order to monitor progress towards related targets, and to create a framework for implementation of those objectives with stable sources of financing. In that regard, it was recommended that further examination of the operational modalities of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development be carried out, including the relationship between the ESCAP Commission sessions and the Forum itself, as well as further consideration of proposals that should be undertaken in consultation with member States and stakeholders.

21. The participants in both meetings also highlighted the importance of creating two new committees: one on financing for development and the other on science, technology and innovation, as well as the need to develop a regional sustainable development road map and a framework for tracking progress on sustainable development goals and related financing mechanisms. They felt that there was a need to establish a new knowledge platform and to engage ESCAP in such a way that the voice of the Asia-Pacific region would be taken into account in shaping the contours of the development agenda beyond 2015.